
RUSSIA COMMENTS ON CURRENT SITUATION OVER APPOINTMENT OF CSTO SECRETARY GENERAL

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The current uncertainty over the issue of the appointment of the CSTO Secretary General is painful for the organization, but it will not affect the CSTO effectiveness and efficiency, Russian deputy foreign minister Alexander Pankin told RIA Novosti.

On November 2 Armenias Yuri Khachaturov was dismissed from the position of the CSTO Secretary General after Armenia applied to the CSTO member states to launch the process of recalling him as criminal case was filed against Khachaturov over the 2008 March 1 unrest in Yerevan. CSTO Deputy Secretary General Valery Semerikov temporarily assumed the duties of the CSTO Secretary General.

President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko on December 21 signed a draft decision of the CSTO Collective Security Council on appointing Stanislav Zas, the State Secretary of Security Council of Belarus, as CSTO Secretary General following the working meeting with the latter. Earlier Zas visited Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Russia for the approval of his candidacy. Moreover, Armenia said visit of Stanislav Zas to Yerevan is not planned. Zas said that he is ready to visit Armenia at any time comfortable for the Armenian leadership. He expressed hope for reaching consensus on his appointment.

The fact that after Armenia recalled the CSTO chief we still do not manage to appoint a new Secretary General is painful for the organization, Pankin said, adding that the situation should be solved as soon as possible.

He ruled out the negative impact of the current situation on the CSTO efficiency. The Russian deputy FM said the CSTO is a key tool of maintaining regional peace and stability, therefore it must operate concretely.

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